pt. 2 of 3 scs

EXCISE

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February 24, 1978

Cyrus R. Vance
Secretary of State
the U.S. State Department
2201 "C" St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY John Simms DATE 2-24-81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

Dear Secretary Vance:

Even when legal matters are involved, or the interest of our country at stake, only a very callous person would not see that it is wrong to use a child as a pawn, especially in what appears to be a "dirty war" from the start.

John (Stoen) Jones is being used as a pawn to serve the intersts of Mr Timothy Stoen, who knowingly and very willingly left the child in Guyana several months back. He vowed to countless people there that it was where John would remain. He also himself witnessed the abandonment of the child by his mother, Grace Stoen, and the trauma that resulted to John over it.

The simple fact remains, though, that there are legitimate legal interests involved, as well as legitimate interests for our nation to consider in diplomatic relations over this custody matter. This is a case under Guyanese jurisdiction, as it should surprise no-one, being that the mother sent the child to Guyana, and Tim Stoen insisted the child remain there. The Guyanese could only be resentful of U.S. intrusion in their court system as we would be of foreign intervention in ours. Moreover, the government there is so pleased with the progress of the agricultural, educational and medical work being undertaken by the Peoples Temple on behalf of the whole area, that it has especially designated the Project as a place through which visiting dignitaries are frequently brought. And it appears that the custody battle is being whipped up in conjunction with efforts to hurt the Project as a whole, a Project that the Guyanese government wants and supports. At the very least, Mr. Secretary, I hope you will check with Ambassador McCoy who visited the Project personally, as have many many other officials with glowing comments entered in the guest book.

Our people in Guyana (some 1500) and the many thousands here in the State feel very adamant about this entire issue. There are countless testimonies -in the thousands-- that Rev. Jim Jones is a man of peace. He has received commendations from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the California State Legislature, was named amongst the top 100 clergymen in the nation by Religion in American Life, received the Martin Luther King Award, Humanitarian of the Year Award from a leading Southern California paper, and the Freedom of the Press Award from the National Newspaper Publishers Association, to name a few, plus years of commendations by leaders in every field, some of which are enclosed. He has been praised by U.S. and Guyanese officials alike for the work in Guyana, which is a credit to both countries. We are openly supportive of the many positive U.S. efforts towards improving relations within our hemisphere, and work to that end.

There is reason to question Mr. Stoen's real interest in this matter. He and others had tried to use all of the church as a "pawn" to set us off on a wrong course that would hurt our country and also ourselves. We are a non-violent people, and always rejected their ideas. Now I have come to suspect Mr. Stoen's motivations from the beginning (although he hac always claimed great allegiance to the church and Rev. Jones), because now that we have a segment of our people successfully established in a peaceful agricultural setting (many came from the inner cities), he has set about trying to actively disrupt the work from "without", where it is so obviously impossible to even attempt to disrupt our work from "within I would not doubt that he has landed on a defenseless innocent, a young child, and Rev. Jones' own child to boot, because he thinks that this is the point that will hurt Rev. Jones and the group (by identification) the most. He and Grace Stoen have shown it is not the child they are interested in. Why otherwise would she cash in the plane ticket she was given to visit her son anytime she chose?

It is cruel to use a child in this way. The people at the Project in Guyana know the backgrounds of Tim and Grace Stoen, and they are outraged at this new effort to ruin the child's future. They stand by Rev. Jones, and will stand up for how he has made a peaceful, productive future possible for them and their children.

As the head of our State Department, even if the issue of the child were not involved, I think you would want to support the Project, not hurt it. It is the best example of American friendship, industry, and goodwill in the Third World. Our people there feel very harmonious towards the U.S. government, and many from the inner cities are able to see things alot more clearly than they could from their previously troubled environments. They only want to work for peace, all the people on the Project, to build a better life for everyone in our two countries. They are suceeding at this remarkably.

I think when you consider these facts, you will not be swayed by any pressure exerted on your office.

Respectfully yours,

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cc: President Carter
Rep. Paul McCloskey
Rep. Timothy Wirth
Rep. George Miller

Encl.